

## **ABS Year book provides unique look at Australia – today and historically**

The latest national snapshot by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) presents a series of fascinating comparisons to the Australia of 100 years ago.

The 87th edition of *Year Book Australia*, launched today in Canberra by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Treasurer, the Honourable Chris Pearce MP, contains a comprehensive and detailed statistical review of aspects of the economy and social conditions in Australia.

Its publication this year is part of the Centenary celebrations of the ABS.

‘Through the Year Book, we can gain an insight into what life was like for our forbears or our more recent families at any stage of those 100 years’, said Mr Pearce.

‘Year Book Australia is a marvellous window into our history, our present and our future, through its presentation of hard facts linked to analysis and trends’.

‘Of special interest, for example, is a remarkable graph on page 97 which illustrates very clearly how different the age structure of our nation is today, compared with a century ago’.

‘In those days the numbers of people in age groups over 45 shrank noticeably until there were very few indeed over 75. Today’s comparable distribution by age show much healthier numbers in the middle years and considerably more people still alive beyond 85’.

‘Interestingly, the proportion of Australians born overseas has not changed much over this time. However, 100 years ago migrants mostly came from the United Kingdom and Ireland whereas today the mixture is much more diverse and Australia’s culture has been enriched as a result’.

Mr Pearce noted that the first Official Year Book of the Commonwealth was published in 1908, although individual Australian States and colonies had been producing year books for several decades previously.

MELBOURNE  
21 January 2005

**Contact:** Bernie Finn 03 9887 3890 or 0419 140 405